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Contemporary Global Issues

Wikispace’s project

A Foreign Example: the French reaction to copyright Infringements

As we all know, Copyrights infringements are illegal, but does it make us stop doing it? I don’t think so, mainly because most people are tempted by free movies, music or books. And this doesn’t concern only American people, but rather affects the whole world. Therefore, it’s logical to wonder how other countries around the globe reacted or plan to react to this problem. Although you may think that downloading isn’t a problem, enjoying free features, it actually makes lose a lot of money to the global economy.

Being French, I’d like to present you how the French system works for now, and also explain a law’s project called “Hadopi”, currently discussed in Congress, which could create a huge change in our society and use of the internet.

Right now in France, the law is easy to understand, and probably similar to everywhere is the world, it’s illegal to get copyrighted Medias we didn’t purchase. However, the problem faced consists in how to enforce this law. France chose to take care of the big “downloaders” that download so much that it can’t be only for their personal use but also for a resale of the product. One can frequently hear in the news that the police arrested this person and this one to have downloaded a lot and made copies from these files1. As much as it has a sensitizing effect in the opinion, it is a pretty vain action, especially because most of the people download only a little, and therefore have no risk to get in trouble. Despite big sellers of illegal copies are an important part of this business and have to get sued, the addition of all downloads by each citizen becomes rapidly a very high amount. In the current situation, people getting less than fifty copyrighted products illegally a month will never have any trouble. That’s why the government decided to think about this problem, and they came to a law’s proposition called: “Hadopi”.

In which ways would this law be different? As you may suppose, every French citizens would be concerned and would need to be careful with their use of the internet. There would be three steps in this law. First, transgressors would be spotted while executing the infringement, thanks to a new system which would only cost 10 million dollars, and would then receive an e-mail to ask them to stop their practices. If they keep doing it anyway, they would receive a second e-mail, and even later, a letter asking them to stop one more time. If after all of that, the targeted person continues not to obey, their internet offer would be cut off for a period from two months to one year. However, people would still have to pay for the internet connection they don’t get, avoiding people to get a new internet operator. Besides that, people could still be fined for their illegal actions. [information from www.lexpress.fr/actualite/media-people/media/la-loi-hadopi-qu-est-ce-que-c-est\_512898.html]

This law would be a first around the world. Even if it has been inspired by foreign countries as England, none of them has been enforcing that much the government’s policy about copyrights. Would this law work as a new way to solve this issue? We’ll know it in a close future if it is passed. From my point of view, I shall say that I would probably slow down my downloads on the internet and totally stop them if I get an e-mail. So, I suppose this law would be working pretty well. However, as for every new proposition, there is an opposition to this law in France. Their arguments are that it’d cause not only a control of downloads but a control of the whole internet, giving the government too much power. Also, some people affirm that the exchange of illegal copyrighted products would continue, but in an underground way, since this law mainly concern peer to peer downloads, and therefore, that the law would be expensive for a useless result.

If you really feel that this law is a threat for your independence on the internet and want to protest (maybe fearing it to come to the USA?), you may sign many petitions. They are easy to find, but here is a link for one of them, attached with a text explaining why you should fight against this law’s project (in French): *gillesridel.nexway.com*

Plus, as it is the tradition in France, you can even participate in a strike against this law, particularly in most big cities (Paris, Lyon, Marseille…), they are pretty frequent ;)

1 : <http://www.theinquirer.fr/2008/11/20/quatorze-francais-arretes-dans-une-operation-anti-piratage-de-film.html>

Sources:

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